

Pochaiv icon Blesses Canada With cross-country visit

— by His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim

On 22 September 2009, the Wonder-working Icon of the Theotokos of the Monastery in Pochaiv, Ukraine, arrived in Canada, to begin a series of visits in this country—visits that would prove to make a significant impression on all of us, whether we managed to venerate this Holy Icon, or not. These visits concluded on 11 October.

After the arrival in Toronto, the Icon was driven towards Montréal, when it became clear to the drivers that there should be a pause in Kingston, Ontario, where the Mission of St Gregory of Nyssa is located. The car went to pass by the Mission, and present there were the Rector and a few other people, who became the first of parishioners in Canada to venerate this Holy Icon. This Mission has been steadfastly persevering for almost thirty years, and facing many an obstacle. The Mother of God had come to encourage them, and she did.

The next stop was in Montréal, where several thousands of people came to venerate this Wonder-working Icon. Some were physically healed; others were refreshed spiritually. In every place the Mother of God stopped, she also brought people to repentance, reconciliation, and healing of the heart. As usual, She brought us, and continues to bring us, to Her Son. The next stop was Toronto, where again several thousands of people queued up to venerate this Wonder-working

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Bishop of Québec City Consecrated in Ottawa On Protection Feast

In Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, on Thursday 1 October 2009, in the presence of the Pochaiv Icon of the Mother of God, Metropolitan Jonah and five members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, as well as four visiting hierarchs (from the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto, the Antiochian Church of America, the Moscow Patriarchate in Canada, and the Church of Ukraine) consecrated

Archimandrite Irénée (Rochon) Bishop of Québec City and Auxiliary to Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada.

Archimandrite Irénée was born into a large French Canadian Roman Catholic family on 25 December 1948, in Montréal QC. In 1961 he had his first contact with the Orthodox Church in Rawdon QC, at the summer church of St Seraphim of Sarov, under Sts Peter and Paul Sobor, Montréal.

On 20 January 1967, he was received into the Orthodox Church by Arch-

bishop Vitaly of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia [ROCOR], and until 1971, he participated in the parish life at St Nicholas Cathedral [ROCOR] in Montréal. During this time, he also took part in the activities of the McGill University Orthodox Christian Fellowship.

In 1971, he completed his BA in Slavic Studies at the University of Ottawa, and then joined Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville NY. In March 1974, after three years of study at Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox

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The Pochaiv Icon of the Mother of God in the centre of Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, on 1 October 2009, the day of Bishop Irénée's consecration.

. . . Visit of the Pochaiv Icon to Canada . . .



Love and devotion to the Theotokos was like this everywhere across the Archdiocese.



At St Herman of Alaska's Sobor, Edmonton, Alberta.



At Holy Resurrection Sobor, Vancouver, British Columbia.

*. . . **Pochaiv Icon visit** continued from p. 1:*

Icon of the Theotokos. Again, there were healings, as well as renewals of the hearts and lives of people who came to Her, and also to those who did not.

The next stop was in Ottawa. Here the Mother of God was in the midst of the many assembled hierarchs, and the Archdiocesan Council, and many of the faithful of the capital, and of Canada. Here the Mother of God had come to the Cathedral which is dedicated to Her Annunciation, and which had previously, as a Roman Catholic church, been dedicated to the Feast of Her Protection (on which day the Cathedral was first blessed and used by us), and for the Episcopal Ordination of our Auxiliary Bishop Irénée (Rochon) of Québec. Here too, as before, there were healings and reconciliations and repentances. After this, there were stops in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina (the Romanian Cathedral of St George), Winnipeg, and finally once again, Toronto. In each of these places there were many healings, renewed hearts, repentances, and reconciliations.

In her Progress across Canada, the Mother of God approached us in the warmth and joy of Her compassionate Heart, and brought with Her the renewal of hope, and a desire among us all to be more seriously faithful. She brought reconciliation again and again, and she brought healing, as I have emphasised. She gave us an opportunity for closeness to Her Holy Icon that is not possible for believers in Eastern Europe, because of such great numbers wanting to venerate the Icon there. Why would she come to us like this,



In Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, Ontario, Greek nuns from the monastery near Montréal, Québec prepare to venerate the icon.

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with such a generous and intimate expression of Love? We, who are unworthy, cannot say, but we can express the depth of our gratitude.

She arrived in Canada, and through this Icon, which has been for 450 years in the Pochaiv Monastery in Ukraine—the land of origin of most of the early founders of Orthodox life in Canada—she embraced all the children of her Son. As the Icon visited us, were there temptations among us? Of course. There could never be such a blessing without interference from the tempter. Did they succeed? Of course not. God’s Love defeats all such tricks and disturbances. If a person for some reason could not manage to participate, was such a person deprived of Grace? No. If a person was blocked from venerating this Holy Icon because the tempter had successfully sowed seeds of skepticism, or something else negative, does that mean that because of this God will reject that person? No. The Lord’s Love is much greater than our limitations, and the Mother of God is an effective conveyor of that Grace.

Let us, who have had the privilege of such a close encounter with the Lord and the Mother of God, now live as well as we can, and as responsibly as we can (always with God’s help), in letting this same compassionate love and generosity shine from us. Let us, as the Mother of God always does, allow the Saviour to reveal Himself through us to His needy children, and let us do so with hearts full of gratitude for the gifts of such inexpressible joy and strength in Christ.

fSeraphim



The Holy Icon visited twice at Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto, Ontario, since Toronto was the city of arrival from, and departure to, Ukraine.



At St Peter the Aleut’s Church, Calgary, Alberta.



The Pochaiv Icon of the Mother of God as it appears without the protective gilded covering.



At Sts Peter and Paul’s Sobor, Montréal, Québec.

. . . **Bishop Irénée**, *continued from p. 1:*

Seminary, he was tonsured a rasophore monk. A year later, in March 1975, he was tonsured a stavrophore monk, and received the name of the Hieromartyr Irénée of Lyons.

In February 1978, he was blessed by Bishop Laurus, then Abbot of Holy Trinity Monastery, to serve in France, in the French-speaking parishes there. He was ordained Hierodeacon on 19 May 1978, in Brussels, Belgium and Hieromonk on 20 August of the same year in Geneva, Switzerland by Archbishop Antony of Geneva. After serving for four years in Lyons, Father Irénée returned to Montréal to serve the French Mission there.

After the 1986 election of Bishop Seraphim as Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Canada, Hieromonk Irénée, Hierodeacon Marc (Pierre), and members of the French Mission in Montréal petitioned to be received into the OCA's Archdiocese of Canada.

Fr Irénée was elevated to the rank of Igumen in 1992, as he cared for the French-speaking monastics in Québec. In 1993, he was assigned priest-in-charge of the St-Benoît French-speaking parish in Montréal. He served also as supply priest in many parishes in Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Québec City.

In 1996, Fr Irénée was assigned as Administrator of the Russian Cemetery and St Seraphim parish, Rawdon QC, an obedience which he fulfilled until 2007. In addition to his pastoral duties in parishes of the OCA, he worked full-time in a local Montréal hospital until December 2008.

On 2 April 2009, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the OCA elevated Igumen Irénée to the rank of Archimandrite, and elected him Auxiliary Bishop for Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada, with the title of Bishop of Québec City.

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Editor: Nun Sophia (Zion),
Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite,
c/o 709 - 2200 Avenue Rd, Toronto ON M5M 4B9
Phone 416-904-4461; Fax 613-925-1521
e-mail: rhodazion@gmail.com

Circulation Manager: Helene Culhane,
377 Kintyre Priv,
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and other missionary labourers
of the Orthodox Church in America.*

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Bishop-electe, Monseigneur Irénée:

Allocution d'acceptation **(Acceptance Speech)**

On the eve of the Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos (September 30), the Rite of Nomination, Proclamation, and Acceptance of a Bishop took place at the Vigil in Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa. Below is the acceptance speech which Bishop-elect Irénée gave, the first half in English, the second half in French :

Your Beatitude, Most Reverend Masters, Very Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

My first contact with Orthodoxy goes back to 1961, when at the age of twelve, while visiting some Russian friends, on a Sunday afternoon, I accompanied them to my first service in the Orthodox Church. It was a crowning, served in a small log chapel surrounded by a forest of fir trees. What I experienced during that joyous service left such an impression on my young soul that I could never put into words the emotions felt at that moment. But the memory remained deep within me all my life. At that young age it awoke in me a need, a craving, which was satisfied only five years later when I consciously decided to remain in the Orthodox Church. I was received into the Church in January 1967 at the monastic brotherhood of Saint Job of Pochaev in Montréal and it was also there that I had my first contact with Orthodox monasticism. The path of my life had been laid out before me.

My conversion had to be one of the most important choices of my life. My love for what I found in St Seraphim's chapel in 1961 has never left me. My constant desire was and still is to serve the Church and the people of God through the Church. Holy Trinity Monastery was the next big step in accomplishing this. It is there that I was spiritually nourished through contact with brilliant luminaries of the Russian diaspora. During those years at the monastery as well as the preceding years as a parishioner in Montréal and Ottawa, I became accustomed to being a "foreigner." I was not Russian and I was not Anglophone American. I heard the Divine Liturgy in my own language for the first time, eleven years after my reception into the Church, in 1977, when I visited the French parishes under Archbishop Antony of Geneva. It is then that I understood the need for mission work in my own country. My experience at Holy Trinity Monastery and in the Western European diocese prepared me to return to Montréal in February of 1982.

I was aware that it was necessary to transmit to my own French-speaking brothers and sisters at home, what had been handed down to me by my teachers in the Faith. I also realized that it was necessary to make Orthodox spirituality available to all, without their having to go through cultural assimilation to get it. I know that Christianity is not ethnic, but the Faith for all mankind. But this Faith is most of the time transmitted through cultures and nations that have been transfigured by Grace. These cultures have grown into what they are because of Orthodox Christianity. We must then not dismiss the experience of Faith that these nations have, and their centuries of experience are necessary for our own future. History has brought us all to this continent for a purpose. Some of us have come a long time ago, some of us have just arrived more recently, but our common heritage, the Faith of our Fathers, is the point that unites us all and the firm foundation of the future of the Church here in this country.

These 31 years of service as a cleric of Christ's Church have been the joy and consolation of my life. The high office of hierarch of the Church has never even crossed my mind. I know my unworthiness, but the Church has seen in me qualities that I still do not see. On April 2 of this year, when I was asked to accept the episcopate of the city of Québec, auxiliary to His Eminence Archbishop Seraphim, was the most difficult thing I have ever had to do. It was difficult because it was going against all that I considered myself to be. Last May, a pilgrimage was made possible through the generosity of the parishes of St Seraphim in Rawdon and St-Benoît-de-Nursie in Montréal. This pilgrimage was a blessing because while praying before the relics of Saints and Holy icons, I came to understand that the only way to live through this was to continue on the path of obedience. It was a few days ago that was read the Gospel reading for the Sunday after the Cross. There, St Mark recounts the words of Our Saviour: "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Mark 8:34) It was during the last few days of the pilgrimage, at Optino Monastery, that I came to realize that having given myself to God, voluntarily, at baptism, at monastic tonsure, at ordination to the priesthood, and many other times, there is only one thing to do now, and that is to accept His will. "Thy will be done." We repeat this many times each day. Then, I must let Him decide and stop fighting to flee the other way. I stand before you with absolute trust in God, but I am overcome by spiritual fear.

Dans L'Échelle Sainte, Saint Jean Climaque nous dit ce qui suit: "C'est l'obéissance qui produit l'humilité, et l'humilité produit la paix et le calme dans une âme; car

elle la délivre des tempêtes des passions, et lui procure une victoire parfaite sur son propre cœur. C'est ce que le roi-prophète nous enseigne par ces paroles: 'Celui qui s'est souvenu de nous dans notre humiliation, nous a délivrés des mains de nos ennemis.' (Ps 135, 23-24)"

C'est dans cet esprit que je suis devant vous, ce soir, attendant que vous m'imposiez les mains lors du terrible mystère que vous accomplirez, si Dieu le veut, à la divine liturgie demain matin, avec crainte de Dieu et dans l'espoir de la miséricorde de Dieu.

Mais je ne peux ne pas rendre hommage à mes Pères saints dans la foi. Mon premier contacte avec l'Orthodoxie a eu lieu avec le Très Révérend Père Oleg Boldireff à Rawdon et ensuite les Pères de la communauté monastique de St-Job-de-Pochaev à Montréal. Les Pères du Monastère de la Sainte-Trinité, à Jordanville dont L'Archevêque Averky, que j'ai eu la grâce de servir les dernières années de sa vie, de mon Père spirituel l'Archimandrite Kiprian, du Père Archimandrite Vladimir et combien d'autres, que Dieu aie leurs âmes. De l'Archevêque Antony de Genève de bienheureuse mémoire et tous les pères et diacres de la Cathédrale de la Ste-Croix à Genève. Finalement, notre Père et Archevêque Séraphim, d'Ottawa et du Canada, qui depuis plus de 20 ans n'a jamais perdu confiance en mon indignité. Même dans les moments difficiles, quand je me sentais découragé et sans force, Monseigneur Séraphim était toujours là, souriant, prêt à consoler et à dire le mot qu'il fallait pour redonner courage.

Maintenant, je me tiens devant vous et il y a une chose qui remplit mon cœur de joie et de confiance. C'est la joie de se retrouver tous ensemble, issus de milieux différents, mais unis dans ce qu'il y a de plus précieux, c'est-à-dire unis dans notre foi commune, notre confession unique en l'Église Une, Sainte, Catholique et Apostolique, sous la protection de notre Souveraine la Toute-Pure Mère de Dieu, présente visiblement en son Icône miraculeuse venue du saint Monastère de Pochaev. Que notre prière commune devant elle soit un témoignage au monde entier de notre volonté d'œuvrer ensemble pour le bien de notre Sainte Église.

Je vous demande de prier le Dieu Tout-puissant de me donner la force et le courage de persévérer sur le chemin qui s'ouvre devant moi, aujourd'hui, pour qu'au terrible jugement dernier je puisse moi aussi, malgré mon indignité, être parmi ceux qui entendront les paroles du Seigneur Jésus Christ: "Venez, vous qui êtes bénis de mon Père; prenez possession du royaume qui vous a été préparé dès la fondation du monde." (Matt. 25:34)



Bishop Irénée's Consecration

At the Divine Liturgy, after the Metropolitan was vested, the Chancellor of the OCA, Archpriest Alexander Garklavs (here pictured beside Archimandrite Irénée), and Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada, Igumen Alexander (Pihach), led the Bishop-elect before the Cathedra (Episcopal Throne) to a very large eagle rug, where he was asked to declare his beliefs (the Creed) and to expand upon the Creed in a more detailed way, concerning the canons of the holy Apostles, and the Holy Fathers, and the traditions and rules of the Church. In the declaring of these, he also made detailed promises which he promised to keep until his very last breath.

After the singing of the Trisagion, the Bishop-Elect was led to the Altar where he knelt. The bishops then held the open Holy Gospels, writing downward, on his head, while the Metropolitan said "The divine grace, which always heals that which is infirm, and fulfils that which is lacking, through the laying-on-of-hands, appoints you, most beloved of God Archimandrite Irénée, to be the Bishop of the God-protected city of Québec." Each bishop then placed his right hand upon the Bishop-Elect's head while the Metropolitan prayed for him, calling on the Lord to send down His Holy Spirit upon him, to consecrate him and to "... Make him holy, that he may be worthy to ask those things which are for the salvation of the people, and that Thou wilt hear him."



After the prayers of consecration, the bishops raised Bishop Irénée up and removed his priestly phelon. The Metropolitan then placed the sakkos, the omophorion, and the other episcopal vestments on him, and with each he said, "AXIOS!" ["Worthy"]. To which first the clergy, and then all the gathered people also replied, "AXIOS, AXIOS, AXIOS!" Then the hierarchs exchanged the Kiss of Peace with the newly-consecrated bishop, while the people sang, "Eis polla eti despota" ["To you many years, Master"]

. . . Photographs of the Consecration of Bishop Irénée . . .

At the Great Entrance, Bishop Irénée received the Chalice and made the prescribed commemorations after the Metropolitan had received the Diskos and made commemorations.

At the communion of the clergy, the Holy Body was given by the Metropolitan and the Precious Blood was given by Bishop Irénée.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the newly-consecrated bishop unvested in the sanctuary and then was led to the Metropolitan, who put on him the riasa and mantya of a bishop, and the Panagia, blessing each as he did so, and placed a prayer rope in his hand.

The bishops then left the Holy Sanctuary and the two senior priests present escorted Bishop Irénée to the Metropolitan, who gave him the episcopal staff. Bishop Irénée then ascended the Cathedra to bless the assembled Church: to the East, the West, the South and the North.



Consecrating bishops, l to r: Bp Meletii of Khotin, Aux. Bp. in Chernivtsi (Ukraine); Bp Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania; Bp Alexander of Ottawa, Eastern Canada, and Upstate New York (Antiochian); Archbp Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; Metropolitan Jonah of Washington and All America; Archbp Sotirios of Toronto (Canada) (Greek Orthodox Metropolia); Archbp Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada; Bp Jov of Kashira (Administrator of the Moscow Patriarchal Parishes in Canada); Bp Benjamin of San Francisco and the West; and Bp Melchisedek, of Pittsburg and Western Pennsylvania.

After the Divine Liturgy, first the clergy and then the congregation went to the Cathedra to receive the blessing of Bp Irénée and to be given a souvenir card depicting the the Pochaiv Icon of the Mother of God.

Present at this Liturgy, in addition to the ten hierarchs who consecrated the new bishop, were thirty priests from several jurisdictions, at least seven deacons, and many subdeacons, readers, and servers.

Over the two days of services (30 September and 1 October, both All-Night Vigil and Divine Liturgy), there were many hundreds of laypeople present, not only to pray at the consecration services, but also to venerate with great warmth and compunction the Pochaiv Icon of the Mother of God. Indeed, often the line before this icon extended all the way out onto the porch and front steps of the Cathedral.



Nouvel évêque de Québec Célèbre son office inaugural À son siège

La mission orthodoxe russe de la Sainte-Trinité a célébré sa plus récente Liturgie le samedi 17 octobre dernier. Cette Liturgie, cependant, contrairement aux précédentes, relevait d'un cachet très particulier.

En effet, Son Excellence Irénée (Rochon), nouvel évêque de Québec, dont la consécration a eu lieu il y a à peine deux semaines à Ottawa en la présence de dix évêques avec en tête Sa Béatitude le Métropolitain Jonah, a célébré pour la première fois, en temps qu'évêque, la Divine Liturgie pour les fidèles dont il a désormais la garde. Également ont concélébré avec Vladyka le prêtre en charge de la communauté, Père Nectaire Feménias, ainsi que le diacre Alexis Vassioushkine, en visite de Toronto.

Cet événement a clairement impressionné la communauté. Pour la première fois en nombre de décennies les hymnes d'une Liturgie Pontificale ont embelli un office. Plus de quarante fidèles ont participé à cette célébration. Le chœur, sous la direction de Michel Woinowsky-Krieger, ont chanté avec aplomb et ferveur. L'église était remplie d'une chaude et joyeuse atmosphère. En vérité, le Roi Céleste était parmi nous, *Toi qui es partout présent et qui remplis tout*

La Liturgie terminée, M.Krieger, au nom de la communauté, a pris la parole pour féliciter Vladyka Irénée et pour lui souhaiter beaucoup de santé, de patience et de force spirituelle dans l'exercice de sa nouvelle obéissance. Le diacre et le chœur ont entonné le *Multos Annos*. Père Nectaire, qui avec matoushka était présent lors de la consécration, a partagé avec les paroissiens ses impressions sur cette journée qu'il a qualifié d'extraordinaire. Par la suite, les fidèles, comme en est maintenant l'habitude, se sont rassemblés dans la salle paroissiale au sous-sol pour y casser la croûte. —*Michel Woinowsky-Krieger, Montréal*



La communauté avec Monseigneur Irénée.

Pastoral Notes

1 Jan 09 : The Russian Orthodox Cemetery in Rawdon, Québec became officially known as "the Russian Orthodox Cemetery in the Name of St Seraphim of Sarov in Rawdon, Québec."

1 Jan 09 : **Priest Jan Pablo (Pau) Ruiz-Gomar** was appointed Administrator of St Seraphim's Cemetery in Rawdon QC, on behalf of the Sobor of Sts Peter and Paul in Montréal QC (the owner of the cemetery).

1 Feb 09 : **Priest Roman Pavlov** was assigned as Second Priest to Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto ON.

19 Apr 09 : The Mission Station of St Nicholas of Myra in Toronto ON was advanced to the status of Mission.

19 Apr 09 : **Priest Nicholas Young** was released from his attachment to Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto ON, and assigned as Rector of the Mission of St Nicholas of Myra in Toronto ON.

4 Sep : **Deacon Alexei Vassiochkin** was released from his attachment to Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto ON, and attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St Silouan the Athonite in Johnstown ON.

4 Sep 09 : **Priest Leonid Misnik** was released from the Archdiocese of Canada, and transferred to the Omophor of Metropolitan Jonah for transfer to the Moscow Patriarchate.

1 Oct 09 : The Episcopal Ordination of **His Grace, Irénée (Rochon)** as Bishop of Québec, and Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Canada, was accomplished by His Beatitude Metropolitan Jonah and many other bishops, in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Ottawa ON.

13 Sep 09 : At the Divine Liturgy at St Herman of Alaska's Church in Langley BC, **Subdeacon Gregory Wright** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate. He is assigned to St Herman of Alaska's Church in Langley BC, as Second Deacon.

30 Sep 09 : **Archpriest Cyprian Hutcheon** was granted release from his responsibility as Rector of Holy Resurrection Sobor in Saskatoon SK, but he retains part-time responsibility as Priest-in-charge.

31 Oct 09 : **Priest Walter Smith** was released from his duties as Rector of Holy Trinity Church in Moose Jaw SK, and was attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St Silouan the Athonite in Johnstown ON. He was given a Leave of Absence for one year.

15 Nov 09 : **Igumen David (Edwards)** was assigned Ingerim Rector of Holy Trinity Church in Moose Jaw SK.

Canadian describes experience As missionary in Zimbabwe

I keep dreaming that I have spontaneously gotten on a plane (or two, or five) and flown back to Zimbabwe. Something about the place sank its teeth deep into me, drawing up memories of other places that bit into me with fervour—places that haunt my memories and tease me with the desire to return. It has been eleven years since I left my first love, Mauritius, and I have never shaken it. It is a part of who I am. On the journey home from Zimbabwe, I could tell that I had fallen in love again. The recurring dream of impulsively returning reinforces this sense that part of Africa has returned home with me, and that part of me is still in Africa. I must tell you about the times when Africa took me by the hand, when we walked side-by-side, when we met each other face to face, when we smiled at each other and embraced, and when we said goodbye.

When my husband Kevin and I originally applied to go on a short-term mission with the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), we had applied for the team to Tanzania. By the time our application was processed, that team was full. We started preparations to go to Nigeria. One week before we were scheduled to leave, the team's visas were denied. It seemed that Zimbabwe was the next option. What did God have in store for us? Was He trying to tell us that it was not His will for us to go on a team this year? Were spiritual forces at work to prevent a team from going? As the departure date for Zimbabwe grew closer, people were asking if we were getting excited. Given the circumstances, I was waiting for the other shoe to drop. Would we be going to Zimbabwe? I wasn't sure. Thanks be to God, our team did go to Zimbabwe and we were able to experience what God is doing there through the Orthodox Church and Metropolitan George.

When we were preparing to go, we didn't know much about this southern African country. We only had a few weeks' notice and no time to research. The news we heard from others painted a bleak picture. We were starting to get nervous. We were pleasantly surprised to find a very different picture when we arrived. Yes, the politics there are not good. Yes, HIV/AIDS is a huge problem (Zimbabwe has the 4th highest rates in the world). Yes, hunger is a problem. Yes, there are utility shortages. But, things have improved greatly in the last six months. We felt safe. People radiate with joy. Even when faced with extreme poverty, the poverty was easy to miss because the joy and excitement of the people overshadowed their lack of resources.

Over the next two weeks, we taught the people about many topics. They are hungry for instruction about the Orthodox Church and way of life. We found so much joy during the teaching times as we shared from our own knowledge and experience, and tried to answer their many questions. They also bared their souls to us by asking very personal questions before and after sessions, as well as during the gender- and age-specific sessions. I was able to relate on a deep level with one woman, Maria, as we shared our experiences of caring for a family member and being present as they left this world. This meaningful conversation helped to reinforce our shared humanity and the struggles that all human beings face.



AmandaEve Wigglesworth is shown teaching children. Beside her is Father Augustine, translating into Shona. Behind him, seated, is AmandaEve's husband, Kevin.

We stayed in Harare (the capital) most of the time, but we also travelled to Bulawayo (the second largest city in Zimbabwe) and some small villages. In one of these villages, Mrehwa, we witnessed their Peanut Butter Project. We had never met them before, but each woman embraced every team member with such excitement, energy, and length that it appeared as though they were greeting long-lost relatives. They honoured us like dignitaries and happily showed off the village. We were also able to try grinding the peanuts and tasting the result. It tasted just like the organic peanut butter I buy at home! The women cooked a traditional Zimbabwean meal for us including meat (something that is always rare in villages). We blessed them with food, toys, school supplies, and candy which had been sent in crates from Greece. His Eminence also blessed them by buying their entire stock of peanut butter as well as handcrafts they had made (which he then distributed as gifts). The entire village was blessed that day, and so were we.

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In the village of Hurungwe (outside of the town of Karoi), we participated in the service to consecrate the foundation of their church. Let me take you there :

Red dust kicks up from the ground, highlighting the stark beauty of beiges and browns in the fields and the leafless trees. The rains won't begin for at least another month—you can taste the dust coating your throat. A group of men are singing in jubilation and stomping the dust with vigour. They keep the beat of invisible drums with their hands and one man has shakers and a whistle.

The tiny village of Hurungwe has little to offer—tattered clothing, bare feet, and hungry bellies are in abundance—but today their spirits are full because today their bishop is visiting with a mission team from the United States and Canada. Today, the foundation stone of their new church will be placed into the foundation ; it will go under the place where the altar will be built.

Emotions are high for everyone. The team members assist in the service and watch their names being lowered into the foundation as founders of this African church. As they clap and dance along to the songs of the Shona women, they know a part of them will remain in Africa forever.

In Marondera, we saw a building project for a new mission centre which will eventually have a church, a clinic, a school, an orphanage, and a home for a priest. His Eminence dreams big, and big things are happening as a result.

We were blessed to witness a Shona wedding of a young diaconal candidate. His ordination to become a deacon is scheduled for November 2009. The Metropolitan indicated that this young man will likely become a priest soon after he becomes a deacon. This is very exciting news because there are so many Orthodox people but so few priests to serve them.

Currently, there is one Greek priest (Fr George) who serves at the Greek cathedral in Harare, and two Shona priests. One of them, Fr Rafael, serves a community of approximately 300 people in Bulawayo. The people speak Ndebele there so Fr Rafael serves in English and the people sing in English, Ndebele, and Greek. The other priest, Fr Augustine, serves two Shona communities : St. Nektarios (over 800 members in a church that seats 200) and another community in Warren Park (approximately 300 people meeting in the yard of the priest's mother-in-law). Since the priest speaks the language of the people, these two churches are able to have services primarily in Shona, but they also use

some English and Greek. Translation of services is on-going, and developing music in a local musical style is yet to begin. Currently, the churches use Greek melodies as well as the Greek school of iconography.

I've mentioned the Greek people a few times. This may have surprised you. It certainly surprised us! In all of our expectations for Zimbabwe, we did not expect to encounter a little Cyprus and Greece! Many of the Greek people in Zimbabwe are third or fourth generation Zimbabweans. Many still refer to themselves as Rhodesians, since the country has only been called Zimbabwe for 29 years. It was hard to wrestle with the idea of white Africans, but I realized that they have lived there longer than my ancestors have been in North America. Saying that they cannot be African because they are white, is like saying a second or third generation Asian or African, cannot be North American simply because they are *not* white.

Despite their African roots, the Greek community has remained very distinct, and has maintained close ties with Greece and Cyprus. We enjoyed visiting with these people too, often for yummy Greek meals. We were able to tell them about our experiences with the black churches and how receptive the people are. They were able to tell us stories of Zimbabwe and how it has changed.

One Greek woman we encountered is St Efterpi of Harare. She reposed approximately six years ago. We heard stories of her life and of the miracles after her death. We saw her crypt and experienced the fragrance of myrrh that exudes when she is present. We were able to bring back some of the healing oil that exuded from her incorrupt body that was discovered when she was exhumed three years after her death. This was a very unexpected experience!

At the end of the day, it was hard to leave because of the relationships we had started to form. After two weeks of clinging to us like Velcro, a few small children will now be wondering, "Where did the white women go?" We connected with brothers and sisters in Christ of all colours, genders, and ages in various ways. As we shared our stories and the people shared theirs, we realized how much we have in common even when our day-to-day lives are so different. It was hard to say good-bye to our remarkable brothers and sisters in Christ after such a short time, but we know that they will be praying for us, our churches, and the next team that will come to serve them. Already, I am wondering whether I will be a part of that team. When God asks, "Who shall I send to Zimbabwe?" Will you answer, "Here I am, Lord. Send me"? —*AmandaEve Wigglesworth, Mission of the Life-giving Spring, Winnipeg MB*

Evidence unseen

Both religion and science—modern physics in particular—operate in the realm of faith based on the evidence of things not seen. Ask a physicist how many particles of non-baryonic “dark matter” he has seen, weighed and measured. “None,” he will have to answer. “Why, then, do you believe in it?” The only answer he can give is, “on the evidence of things not seen.” Higgs Boson is another construct accepted on the evidence of things not seen. Cosmic string theorists must give a similar answer with regard to cosmic strings (although they are not so certain that they do exist).

Quantum mechanics is not a final theory, but a transitional phase of physics. It has led us to understand that, from the perspective of human reason, strangeness and mystery are prevailing conditions of all existence. As we transition in modern physics, how much greater will the mystery become and how much more will the “strangeness” confound our reason?

Each field in the universe interacts with all other fields. Two particles emanating from the same quantum construct continue to communicate with each other and affect each other no matter how far apart they become. Both physics and the Orthodox Christian spiritual life are focussed on energy and light. Energy is about relationships. The soul as intelligent energy, God Who communicates his uncreated energy, and the saints who communicate the energy of divine grace : none of these concepts is any more beyond human reason than the realities of quantum physics.

If there are interactive fields in the physical universe, then why not in the spiritual universe, in which the prayers of the saints affect those for whom they pray? Why should not the spiritual energy of the saint reach out to the one toward whom it is directed? Ask as well how particles communicate by means of virtual particles that “borrow” energy from the universe, or how a neutrino changes back and forth from electron to tau as it travels from sun to earth. Ask for a clear and definite, provable answer about the actual nature of gravity. Is it a force, a distortion of space-time? Is there such thing as a graviton, and does it leak out of our universe or seep away into a different dimension? Are cosmological constants always, or ever, constant? Can you prove to me beyond all shadow of doubt that there are three quarks in every baryon? That there is a quark and antiquark in every meson? Does gravity work the same in other galaxies as it does in ours? Are there more than four dimensions in our universe? Is there a spiritual energy

that is somehow analogous to physical energy? If so, could spiritual energy like physical energy sometimes be manifested in a material form?

Are the acts of divine grace and the miracles of the saints all actions of spiritual energy, and if so, is this really so much more difficult to apprehend than the mysteries and strangeness of the quantum world? And do we not apprehend both from the evidence of things not seen, which is the essence of faith?

Father Philotheos Zervakos is venerated for many things, and credited with miracles being fulfilled through his prayers. To me, his great gifts were his wisdom and profound understanding of humanity. Father Philotheos had a gift for bringing peace and harmony into people’s hearts, and into relationships between people. He not only reconciled enemies, but also reconciled people with life itself. He also filled hearts with peace and hope in the face of death. He operated in the realm of the energy of grace, and touched all who came to him with that energy, that grace which is a gift of the Holy Spirit. This is hardly strange to those who have faith in God, and should not be so strange to those who have faith in the operations of quantum physics.— *Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo), All Saints of North America Monastery, Dewdney BC*

Medical cadavers And sacred flesh

Many considered it just a cadaver. It was available to medical students (such as our Deacon Kurt Jordan) in a body bag, with the letter “F” on a tag, indicating that the cadaver was female. No name, no personal history, just a lifeless piece of flesh, no longer a human being. Except, of course, to Deacon Kurt and to Orthodox like him who can still discern the image of God in His children, even when they lie stretched out on a table, having willed their body to science for medical students to dissect as part of their education.

So it was that Deacon Kurt and his family met with me after Vespers to serve a brief Memorial Trisagion for this nameless woman. To us as we prayed, she could only be the anonymous “handmaiden of God,” but to God who knows all, she was His child, and someone’s daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother. She had a name and a history, and likes and dislikes, and a certain kind of laugh, and certain hobbies, and personal triumphs and personal heartbreaks. And she also had a special kind of selflessness, which would move her to donate her body to science, that in death she might help others learn the art of healing.

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We are tempted in our culture to view human flesh as an object, interchangeable with other like objects, so that the human body is a kind of walking “spare parts” repository. Human flesh, when thus viewed, has no sanctity of its own. Sanctity, if it exists at all, resides in the immaterial soul, and the body after death can have no intrinsic value at all. It can be burned like garbage (*i.e.*, cremated), it can be displayed at Vancouver Science World for youngsters to gawk at (as in the so-called “Body Worlds” exhibition), and any objection to these things is considered quaint and outdated.

But we Orthodox know otherwise. We know that God made both flesh and spirit, and united them into a single organism and endowed both with His sacred image. That is why our deacon requested the Trisagion for this nameless woman, for to him, at least, she was a person. More than that, we wrote some brief prayers for use before and after working on the cadaver, to acknowledge the greatness of the gift the deceased had made, and to pray for her soul before God. The prayers are as follows:

Before beginning work, make the Sign of the Cross over the cadaver and then say:

“Almighty Father, Maker of the souls and bodies of all men, give peace to the soul of the *brother/sister* whose body lies before me, and grant that *he/she* may have a

reward from You for offering *his/her* flesh to further the medical arts of men. Grant Your consolation also to *his/her* family, and lead us all into Your eternal Kingdom that through Your mercy we may feast together at Your Table and praise You for the healing You offer to Your children, through Jesus Christ our Lord with whom You are blessed together with Your life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”

After concluding work, make the Sign of the Cross again over the cadaver, and say:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Healer of our souls and bodies, I thank You for this opportunity to benefit from the sacrifice of the *brother/sister* whose body lies before me. Fill me with reverence for all that You have made and grant that I may ever use the wisdom that I have gained today to ease the suffering of Your children and to glorify Your most holy Name, who live and reign, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”

It is necessary that medical students have the opportunity to work on cadavers, in order to have the skill to successfully treat the living. It is also necessary that we Orthodox people not lose sight of the humanity of those dead whose bodies are thus used, lest we lose some of our humanity ourselves. For our God is the God of the living and the dead, and the lover of all that He has made.—*Fr Lawrence Farley, St Herman of Alaska Church, Langley BC*

*Remember the Our Father and the Beatitudes :
you love Christ only as much as you love your enemies.*

RETURN ADDRESS:

Archdiocese of Canada,
Orthodox Church in America
P.O. Box 179
Spencerville, Ontario
K0E 1X0 Canada

